

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 281335Z APR 76
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3141
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 6617

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJECT: THE "SUNDAY SEMINAR" OF JEWISH DISSIDENTS

REF: MOSCOW 468,

1. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY TWO MEMBERS OF THE "SUNDAY SEMINAR" GROUP OF JEWISH DISSIDENTS OF A MARKED FALL OFF IN KGB HARASSMENT IN THE LAST MONTH. TWO AMERICAN NATURAL SCIENTISTS, TRAVELING IN THE SOVIET UNION AS TOURISTS, LECTURED FOR FIVE STRAIGHT DAYS TO THE "SUNDAY SEMINAR." NEITHER THEY NOR MEMBERS OF THE SEMINAR HAD ANY PROBLEMS AS A RESULT. SEMINAR ATTENDANCE, WHICH HAD FALLEN OFF DURING THE HARASSMENT DESCRIBED REFTEL, HAS AGAIN CLIMBED AND NOW AVERAGES MORE THAN 30 PARTICIPANTS. OUR SOURCES SPECULATE THAT THE LACK OF HARASSMENT DURING THE PRESENTATION BY THE AMERICANS WAS DUE (A) TO THE NATIONALITY OF THE SPEAKERS, AND (B) TO THE FACT THAT THE SUBJECTS WERE RIGOROUSLY SCIENTIFIC AND THAT NO "POLITICAL" OR "HUMANITARIAN" THEMES WERE RAISED DURING THE SEMINAR MEETINGS.

2. OUR SOURCES FEEL THAT THEY ARE ON PROBATION; THAT IF THEY STICK TO SCIENTIFIC SUBJECTS THEY MAY BE ABLE TO AVOID EXAGGERATED ATTENTION FROM THE SOVIT AUTHORITIES. IN ORDER TO TEST THIS THEORY, THEY WILL NOT SCHEDULE "POLITICAL" TOPICS FOR THE SEMINAR UNTIL THE END OF MAY, WHEN THEY PLAN AN DEBATE AN AS YET UNDECIDED SOCIAL SCIENCE TOPIC.

STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HARASSMENT, JEWS, REPORTS, DISSIDENT FACTIONS, SPEAKERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MOSCOW06617
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760162-0615
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760411/aaaaajcg.tel
Line Count: 60
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 MOSCOW 468
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <02 SEP 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE "SUNDAY SEMINAR" OF JEWISH DISSIDENTS
TAGS: PINT, UR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006